

The Gospel of John

Chapter 8:21-36

May 25, 1997

- **The Gospel of John Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Our Lord is the Word, the Light and the Life
- Chapter 2 The Lord of the Wedding Feast; Zeal for the purity of the temple
- Chapter 3 Spiritual Birth, Belief and Salvation vs. Unbelief and Condemnation
- Chapter 4 The Ministry in Samaria, The Harvest, The Faith of the Nobleman
- Chapter 5 Paralytic man healed on the Sabbath, Unity of The Father and Son
- Chapter 6 The Bread of Life
- Chapter 7 The public debates about Jesus during the Feast of Tabernacles
- Chapter 8 Public debates: Woman caught in adultery; The Son makes you free

- **Review and Introduction**

The events of this section of the chapter continue to take place in the treasury of the temple. Having dealt with the people who sought to trap Jesus with the arrest of the woman caught in adultery, Jesus continues His instruction to the crowd.

- **Exposition of John 8:21-36**

21 Then Jesus said to them again, "I am going away, and you will seek Me, and will die in your sin. Where I go you cannot come."

- Again Jesus declares to the crowd that though the time will come when they will seek Him, He will be with His father in heaven where they cannot come. It is clear here that Jesus is declaring a difference between the sheep and the goats; those who do not believe in Him (the goats) will not be able to come into heaven. Jesus did not die for them, and there is no other basis upon which they may be saved.
- It is evident here that the manner in which they will seek Him is not sufficient unto salvation. We have seen elsewhere in this book that Jesus declares that all who come to Him are the ones whom the Father has given to the Son and the Son will never cast them out. Therefore, this manner of seeking which does not yield the fruit of eternal life must be on some other basis than belief and faith. We can see that there are many reasons why someone may seek Christ and that God has not left each of us up to our own devices. If we are to be saved, we must seek Christ by faith and belief in who He is.
- Those who do not believe in Him, will die with all of their sin in tact and carried upon their back. When they stand before the throne of God, their sin will be evident and they will receive the wrath of God for the totality of their sin. This is contrasted with those who believe in Christ. They stand before the same throne but, all they stand with is the righteousness of Christ. This alone is sufficient to propitiate the wrath of God.

22 So the Jews said, "Will He kill Himself, because He says, 'Where I go you cannot come'?"

- It does not appear that the crowd in total are responding with these questions of unbelief but rather there may be people in the crowd who are shouting out these things. Perhaps the thinking here is that if Christ is going to kill Himself, we certainly would have nothing to do with that and therefore, we will not go where He is going [yet].

23 And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."²⁴ "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

- Jesus makes another division between Himself, including those who faithfully believe in Him, and those who will die in their sins. This division contrasts two origins; those who are from above and those who are from below. Those who are from above still carry the lineage of Adam but they have been given a new nature and new citizenship in the kingdom above. Those who are from below share in the same original nature but are not given a spiritual or heavenly citizenship.

25 Then they said to Him, "Who are You?" And Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been saying to you from the beginning."²⁶ "I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him."²⁷ They did not understand that He spoke to them of the Father.

- Having plainly declared to them that they must believe in who He is, they respond with, "OK then, who are you?" But even when Jesus declares the truth plainly to them who have not been granted the ability to hear will be confused and subject to the judgement of God. Again, Jesus declares that He did not come to bring judgement—He will later.

28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."²⁹ "And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him."

- It appears that Jesus is making a clear reference to His crucifixion. In that death, it will be made clear that Jesus does only what the Father wants Him to do. If Jesus had been doing those things which seemed good only to Himself as a man would, He would not have endured the torture, the shame and humiliation of the cross.

30 As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed."³² "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

- Abiding in Christ is begun by believing in who He is and then is continued by obeying His commands. Those who do such things are the ones whom Christ has purchased and the Father gives them the righteousness of His Son. Those from below think that such a person is in bondage by being subservient to the Father, however, this is actually a position of freedom.

33 They answered Him, "We are Abraham's descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can you say, 'You will be made free'?"³⁴ Jesus answered them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin."³⁵ "And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever."³⁶ "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. NKJV

- It is rather interesting that they would declare that "...[they] have never been in bondage to anyone" when surely they were aware of their own history and especially their current occupation by the Romans. But they must in some way think that even though they were made captive they were still free to worship their God. But in truth the only thing that makes us free is being in the Son through faith.
- Just as John the Baptist declared, "... God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones" to those hypocrites who came to him to be baptized, so too Jesus rebukes their claim that their eternal inheritance comes through being descendants of Abraham.
- Jesus declares that those who sin are slaves to sin unless the Son has made them free. This is consistent with Paul's instruction that we were once enslaved to our sinful nature in which we once obeyed all of its lusts. But now we have been bought with a price and are now Christ's slaves to righteousness (Rom 6).
- Those who are true sons of God will abide in Him to the end. This truth can be declared with confidence because it is Christ who will ensure that all that the Father has given unto Him will be raised up in righteousness on the last day. There is no chance that any will perish but all will persevere to the end. Those who "fall away" are those who were never in the house as a son but rather were slaves pretending to be sons.